



AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace paragraphs 0037, 0039, and 0040 with the following revised paragraphs:

[0037] In the preferred embodiment, shown in FIG. 2, the protective article including the frame 1 is detachable from the sports boot, enabling the user to adapt the boot to the sporting activity. Thus, the snowboarder can equip his/her boot with the device if it is desired to travel on any type of snow or on hilly ground, or the device can be removed if it is desired to travel along a track covered with packed snow. In this embodiment, the frame 1 is positioned outside the boot CH, in the area of the front portion of the envelope O which, in this case, is the upper O, and possibly the tongue 50 of the boot CH. As mentioned previously, it is imperative to firmly maintain the frame 1 on the boot CH. The frame includes supports 100, 101, or support areas, on opposite ends of the bending zone 2. The front support 100 is positioned so as to be inserted, at the base of the tongue 50, between the tongue 50 and the lace keepers 41 as well as the lace 40, which extends across the longitudinal opening within which the tongue is positioned. As can be seen in FIG. 2, the frame 1 is elongated in a direction between the supports 100, 101, or opposed ends of the frame, that is, the length between the supports 100, 101 or opposed ends of the frame is greater than the width of the frame, the width extending transverse to the direction between the supports 100, 101.

[0039] FIG. 3 shows the protective article in detail, once it has been removed from its support such as the boot. The frame 1 has a geometry that is extended length-wise on both ~~sides~~ ends of the bending zone 2 by supports 100, 101, along a given direction AA substantially perpendicular to the axis γ_1 of the notches 4. These supports 100, 101 enable the frame 1 to be supported on the parts of the body that extend on both sides of the joint to be protected, namely, the tibia and the instep for the

ankle joint. To guarantee maximum comfort for the user, the supports 100, 101 are as wide as possible, in order to better distribute the pressures on these body parts. This arrangement translates into widths L2 and L3, along an axis Δ of the supports 100, 101, respectively, greater than the width L1 of the frame 1 in the area of the bending zone 2, thereby providing an inner surface area facing the tibia or instep and an opposite outer surface, the distance between the inner and outer surfaces establishing a thickness of the supports 100, 101. Conversely, the bending zone 2, located between the supports 100, 101, makes it possible to control the bending. Since this bending is essentially concentrated in the area of the notches 4, the geometry of the frame 1 must limit the residual bendings of the frame 1 in the zones 103 between notches. A solution for achieving this objective is to retain a frame 1 that is thicker, in the zones 103 between notches, than the supports 100, 101, and therefore has greater bending inertia.

[0040] To guarantee stability of the bending abutment, with respect to the bending load, the frame 1 is fixed on and overlies a membrane 3 that is flexible and substantially inextensible. The fixing is obtained by appropriate means such as seams 152 that extend at least along the ends of the supports 100, 101. The seams 152 can extend along the entire periphery of the frame 1.